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Question of Cyprus

Oceans and the law of the sea

Security Council
Seventy-first year

Letter dated 23 May 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Greece to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

With reference to the letter of the Permanent Representative of Turkey dated 28 April 2016 addressed to the Secretary-General (A/70/855-S/2016/406, 2 May 2016), I have the honour to state the following:

The aforementioned letter contains unsubstantiated, unfounded and abusive allegations that totally disregard the sovereign rights of other States, including Greece, in the maritime area of Eastern Mediterranean west of meridian 32° 16′ 18″ E. Such allegations go well beyond the rules of international law, by denying the entitlement of Greek islands to maritime zones, contrary to international law of the sea.

Greece wishes to reiterate that it has *ipso facto* and *ab initio* sovereign rights and jurisdiction in the above area on the basis of the relevant provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea 1982, customary international law, as well as of its national legislation. This position has been registered on numerous occasions with the United Nations (notes verbales dated 24.2.2005, see *Law of the Sea Bulletin, vol. 57, p. 129*; No. 974/8.5.2012, see *Law of the Sea Bulletin, vol. 79, p. 14*; and No. 389/20.2.2013, see *Law of the Sea Bulletin, vol. 81, p. 23*), and has also been communicated bilaterally to Turkey (notes verbales No. 187/AS 2207/24.7.2009, No. 187/AS 2648/15.11.2011, No. 187/1066/30.4.2012 and No. 156.3/1675/12.7.2012).

Furthermore, the Turkish allegation referring to the delimitation agreements in the Mediterranean and the Aegean Sea is totally misleading and arbitrary, as it aims at interfering with the rights of Greece to effect delimitation of its maritime areas by agreement with third States on the basis of international law, without prejudice to the sovereign rights of third States. Greece's firm policy is to settle any outstanding issue with its neighbours in good faith and in accordance with international law.

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Greece, therefore, refutes in their entirety the Turkish allegations contained in the above letter, also expressed in the Turkish note verbale dated 12 March 2013, and calls upon the Government of Turkey to respect the sovereign rights and jurisdiction of all the States in the said maritime area in accordance with international law.

I would be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda items 44 and 79 (a) and of the Security Council, and published in the next Law of the Sea Bulletin.

(*Signed*) Catherine **Boura**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative